

SUMMARY

This *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* for Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (NRRA or National Area) provides the first comprehensive framework plan prepared according to NPS policies and procedures. It provides a current overall plan for the area. Previously, the National Area operated along the lines of a 1981 Master Plan prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers, plus specific plans prepared since jurisdiction was transferred to the National Park Service (NPS) in 1990.

The *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* examines and reaffirms Congress' purpose and direction for the National Area. It identifies the management requirements placed on the National Area as a unit of the national park system. The plan then considers different alternatives for managing the National Area along with an environmental evaluation of the alternatives. A no-action alternative is included for comparison. Development sites, roads, and trails within the National Area are examined.

Out of three preliminary alternatives presented to the public prior to the issuance of the first draft plan, two were chosen for evaluation in greater detail and the third was dropped due to its higher development level. The two remaining alternatives, Alternatives A and B, provided general zones for management guidance and some additional detail on selected development sites. Alternative A represented a somewhat less developed concept than Alternative B.

In addition to Alternatives A and B identified in the first draft plan, a new, more detailed alternative was presented in a Supplemental Draft GMP/EIS. This new alternative, Alternative D, was the NPS' preferred alternative in the *Supplemental Draft*. Now revised based on public comment and additional internal review, Alternative D is the Preferred Alternative in the Final GMP/EIS. Under the Preferred Alternative, more localized areas are identified for different zone types, with particularized management prescriptions. A greater degree of guidance for resource management and visitor use would be achieved. This guidance is augmented with information, proposals, and alternatives for development of facilities, including roads and trails. Many existing facilities are reaffirmed as appropriate for inclusion in an official system; a number of new facilities are proposed to fill gaps and to provide for areas more recently acquired; and some existing facilities would be removed. Overall, the development level and types of facilities proposed over the planning horizon of 15 to 20 years would remain essentially the same. Special provisions are included for hunting access and for off-road vehicles. All routes proposed for use by off-road vehicles would be designated, according to Executive Order.

Development and rehabilitation of various sites and facilities would have short-term, localized resource impacts that would occur sporadically over time. Planning and design measures, including mitigation, would be included to minimize these impacts.

Special projects, including management of oil and gas activities, reclamation of contaminated mine drainage, native species management, cultural landscape identification and management, and increased monitoring, would be continued or initiated. Interpretation of National Area resources would be increased and become more focused through completion of comprehensive interpretive planning.